



SANTA ROSA PLAIN GROUNDWATER SUSTAINABILITY AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Opportunity for Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Users to View, Correct Information

Santa Rosa, CA – Starting Monday, March 22, groundwater users who own property in the Santa Rosa Plain area will have an opportunity to review and update their water use information. The new Groundwater User Information Data Exchange (GUIDE) Program is being launched by the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA) to improve understanding of how groundwater is used, and the number and types of water wells in the Santa Rosa Plain basin.

The GUIDE Program affects approximately 8,369 parcel property owners who are assumed to get their water from a groundwater well and who live in the Santa Rosa Plain basin, generally in rural areas. The Santa Rosa Plain basin is the largest groundwater basin in Sonoma County. It stretches from Cotati to Windsor (north to south) and from Sebastopol to eastern Santa Rosa (west to east).

“The information gathered through the GUIDE program will help our local efforts to ensure that we have groundwater available now and for future generations,” said GSA Chair and Santa Rosa Councilmember Tom Schwedhelm. “We need to better understand who has wells, and if they are using water for their home, farm, commercial business – or all three.”

Groundwater is a critical source of water in the Santa Rosa Plain. About 32,000 people and more than 11,000 acres of agriculture in the basin are reliant on groundwater for drinking and for irrigating landscapes and crops. In addition, all the cities and towns in the Santa Rosa Plain use groundwater during emergencies and during droughts.

“This program simply asks property owners to review the information we have regarding how they use their land and the number of wells that are on their property,” said Susan Harvey, GSA Vice-Chair and Cotati Councilmember. “We hope that groundwater users will spend a few minutes looking at their online data to make sure it’s correct. If it is not correct, we’re asking them to let us know. If it is correct, they don’t need to do anything.”

Data used in the GUIDE Program is derived from the County of Sonoma's planning, land use and well permitting information. While the primary purpose of the program is to fill information gaps regarding the number and type of active wells in the basin, the GUIDE Program is also an opportunity for groundwater users to clarify or correct existing information about water use.

Most people who get their water from the cities of Cotati, Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa and Sebastopol and the Town of Windsor will not be affected by the GUIDE Program. The exception is people who live within a city but also have a groundwater well that they use for landscaping (these wells are usually located in older neighborhoods).

The information will also be used to help calculate a fee (approved in 2019, but not currently paid by Santa Rosa Plain groundwater users) to fund the GSA's work needed to comply with State law by bringing the basin into sustainability. For information about the fee, go to <https://santarosaplaingroundwater.org/finances/fee/>.

The GUIDE Program works as follows:

- Groundwater users (people who own primarily rural property in the Santa Rosa Plain groundwater basin) will receive a letter informing them about this new program and the action being requested of them.
 - They can go online at www.santarosaplaingroundwater.org/user to verify information regarding their property and water use. Property owners can also call (707) 243-8555.
- At www.santarosaplaingroundwater.org/user, owners can confirm that their property is in the SRP basin and view known information about the property.
- If the online information is inaccurate, the owner will have an opportunity to correct the data using a custom link to a survey that will auto populate some of the known property information relevant to the GSA. For example, the survey includes the property size, its primary use (residential, agricultural, commercial) and the number of wells (if known).
- If the information is accurate, the property owner doesn't need to take any action, but may consider providing additional voluntary information to enhance understanding of local groundwater quality and groundwater use issues.

The information collected by the program is confidential and private, will improve information on groundwater in our region, be used only for the purposes of sustainable groundwater management, and will not be disclosed unless required by law.

The GSA was created in June 2017 as the result of California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The primary aim of this law is to provide a framework for sustainable, local groundwater management in places like the Santa Rosa Plain.

Go to santarosaplaingroundwater.org for additional information about the program. For specific questions unanswered on the website, members of the public should email info@santarosaplaingroundwater.org or call 707-243-8555.

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